

THE CATHOLIC RADICAL

“...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed.” Peter Maurin

October/November 2018

Price: For whatever it's worth.

Love in a Time of Cold Water

by the Brisbane, Australia Catholic Worker

In October, after a period where we had quite a few people staying at the house, we received a whopping electricity bill. It was cause for discussion — partly because we would have to find the money to pay for it, but mostly because we didn't feel it reflected our values very well. In a world where we are increasingly seeing the destructive results of climate change, we try to live simply to ensure there are enough resources to go around and not destroy the planet. If we are against new coal mines, then surely we also have to address the things in our own lives that cause coal to be burned.

So, after a bit of investigation into our electricity usage, and in the Catholic Worker tradition of taking personal responsibility, we decided to switch off our hot water system — at least for summer (when, let's face it, no one really needs a hot shower). Six months later, it is still off. Here are some of the housemates with their experiences:

Michael: Our electrical usage has gone from 22 kilowatts a day in October to 6 kilowatts a day. We were using all this coal-driven electrical power just to heat water, so it's clear that environmentally it's been a good thing. It hasn't changed very much for me because I've been having hot showers when I'm at other places with solar hot water.

Franz: It's felt like it's a good thing to do and a very easy way to help the planet. I'm also a strong believer in the idea that restraining yourself from certain pleasures is good for your soul; self-control is an essential spiritual practice. The main challenge has been doing the dishes. You psyche yourself up for the dishes, then you have to wait another three minutes



for water to boil.

Dana: In New Zealand, I lived without hot water and the shower was outside and it was cold, so it's pretty easy compared to that. It makes me feel tough, and I like to boast about it to people. It was subtle boasting. Maybe they were impressed on the inside.

David: My showers have gotten short and I have a very specific routine now. I start with my feet, then my ankles, and work up slowly to build up for the shock. Showering at 6 A.M. when getting ready for university is a bit rough. But I'm getting more pleasure from hot showers when I do have them.

Blake: It's been horrible. I've had like two showers in the past two months.

Despite the many benefits, we are hoping to install a solar hot water heating system in time for winter. Ω

Barmen Today

A Contemporary Contemplative Declaration

Editor's Note: Faculty and students of the Living School at the Center for Action and Contemplation in Albuquerque, New Mexico wrote the following statement, inspired by the “Theological Declaration of Barmen,” written in 1934 by Karl Barth and other German Christians in response to Christian acquiescence to the rise of Adolf Hitler and Nazism.

History is filled with moments which demand words and actions to define fundamental values and commitments. Such moments require not only humble introspection consistent with contemplative practice but also the concurrent courage to speak prophetically, consistent with such practice.

In 1934 in Germany, at a time when humanity faced the threats of the tyrannical and evil power of Nazism, when the state church of Germany affirmed the actions and leadership of its nation to ensure its place of privilege in society, not all voices of opposition remained silent. Those signing the Barmen Declaration spoke out as an act of “divine obedience” in resistance to the church's unconscionable moral compromise, proclaiming their allegiance to a Truth greater than temporal politics.

Time has revealed the Barmen Declaration to be a significant confessional document, a historical statement defining fundamental values and commitments.

In contemporary America, we face parallel threats and affirmations as

(Continued on Page 4)

Love Not War

by Patrick O'Neill

My neighbor in Garner, North Carolina, Janie, sent out a nice July 4th greeting in an email to the folks who live on our dead end street. "Greetings Neighbors," she wrote, "Thinking about and feeling... GRATEFUL for our MILITARY HEROES. BLESSED AND NOSTALGIC about this 4th HOLIDAY. PROUD of our 'GRAND OLD FLAG.' THANKFUL for our 'SWEET LAND OF LIBERTY.' GOD BLESS THE U.S.A. ! HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY !"

Janie's husband, Bill, is a retired US Marine veteran. They often fly the flags of the branches of the armed forces on a clothesline in their yard on other patriotic days like Veterans Day and Memorial Day.

Janie knows I am an anti-war activist. I stopped by her house recently to show her my federal probation ankle monitor and let her know I would likely be going to federal prison as a result of my recent protest against the Trident submarine, a component of the US nuclear arsenal, and arguably the most insidious weapons system ever built.

I really like Janie and Bill, and I think they like me. I like the fact that we like each other, even though we have diametrically opposed views of our nation and its military. In truth, our families have far more in common than the few areas where we disagree.

I understand Janie's enthusiasm for "Independence Day," because, since her husband risked his life on the battlefield, and his sacrifice could have left her a widow, she and Bill have a lot invested in their nationalism.

Also important is the fact that the majority of our service members — especially those placed in harm's way — are working class people who often join the military for economic reasons. It is telling that few of our citizen soldiers are from wealthy families; and even fewer of our service members are the children of politicians.

As a father of eight children, none of whom have an inclination to pursue a military career, I harbor great suspicions of the motivations of leaders of a nation

state in which almost no politicians have children fighting in the trenches of the wars they promote and fund. (Could it be they know something we don't know?)

My opposition to militarism stems primarily from my religious beliefs. As a Christian, I think Jesus meant it when He said: **"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."** (Matt. 5:44) Killing other human beings I don't know,



just because the government tells me to do so, is not an option for me as a Catholic pacifist.

But, even if I believed a military was necessary to make our lives safer or more free, I could never support the madness that is modern warfare, where weapons of mass destruction wait on hair-trigger alert to destroy entire cities, and quiet drones secretly drop bombs from the sky — "only on the bad guys."

Our world is always just seconds away from nuclear annihilation, a legacy I am ashamed to leave for my children and two grandchildren on the way. I shudder to think what the future will be like for the generations of humans to come. Ω

Editor's Note: Patrick O'Neill is a member of the Charlie Mulholland Catholic Worker in Garner, North Carolina. Along with Carmen Trotta, Clare Grady, Steve Kelly, Liz McAlister, Martha Hennessy, and Mark Colville, he demonstrated at the Kings Bay Naval Base in Georgia on the anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In his statement for trial, he wrote:

*"With a deep sense of humility, the Kings Bay Plowshares, a group of seven devout Roman Catholics, relying on sacred scripture and prayer for guidance, have attempted to follow the teachings of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, by challenging the idolatry of a human-made idol called Trident. With hammers, blood, spray paint, Catholic lectionaries, rosary beads, and other symbols of our faith, we entered Naval Station Kings Bay to beat swords into plowshares (Isaiah 2:4) and smash idols — false gods that are excoriated in the Old Testament: **"Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the Lord alone, shall be devoted to destruction."** (Exodus 22:20)*

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CATHOLIC



RADICAL

Published every two months by:

The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community

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Founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Climate Change News



Losing Earth: The Decade We Almost Stopped Climate Change

...We know that if we don't act to reduce emissions, we risk the collapse of civilization. We also know that without gargantuan intervention, whatever happens will be worse for our children, and worse yet for their children, and even worse still for their children's children, whose lives, our actions have demonstrated, mean nothing to us.

New York Times Magazine
August 1, 2018

Trump unveils plan to make it easier for cars to pollute

...The new proposal would freeze the increase of average fuel economy standards after 2021 at about 37 miles per gallon.... "The administration's effort to roll back these standards is a denial of American auto makers' engineering capabilities and ingenuity," said John DeCicco, an expert on transportation technology at the University of Michigan....

The New York Times
August 3, 2018

Heat in Europe signals long-term climate shift

In Northern Europe, this summer feels like a modern-day version of the biblical plagues. Cows are dying of thirst in Switzerland, fires are gobbling up timber in Sweden, the majestic Dachstein glacier is melting in Austria.... A number of cities and towns in Norway, Sweden, and Finland hit all-time highs this summer, with towns

as far as the Arctic Circle recording nearly 90-degree temperatures....

The New York Times
August 5, 2018

State pols wilt facing climate change

...Last week the Legislature passed a modest clean energy bill. The Massachusetts Sierra Club's Emily Norton compared it to going from "two packs of cigarettes a day to one-and-a-half packs." ...Now, we're sweating through the fourth hottest year on record, followed by 2014, 2015, and 2017.... In Miami, Florida, the number of 90-plus-degrees days has soared from 40 in 1970 to 100 last year....

The Boston Globe
August 6, 2018

Point Reached, Report Warns

Scientists are warning that a domino effect will kick in if global temperature rise more than 2° C above pre-industrial levels, leading to "hothouse" conditions and higher sea levels, making some areas on Earth uninhabitable....

CNN
August 7, 2018

Growth, climate change are cited in fueling California blazes

Twin Northern California blazes fueled by dry vegetation and hot, windy weather grew Monday to become the second-largest wildfire in state history, becoming the norm as climate change makes the fire season longer and more severe...

The Boston Globe
August 7, 2018



Ireland adopts 100% fossil fuel divestment

...The landmark divestment bill...requires the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund to divest public money from peat, coal, oil, and gas companies nationally and internationally.... More than 300 million euros are believed to be at stake....

National Catholic Reporter
August 10-23, 2018

Saint Francis Day March Against Climate Change

Thursday, October 4

Gather at Elm Park, Worcester
2:45 - 5 PM

More info: theresecw2@gmail.com

Barmen

(Continued from Page 1)

prominent and privileged leaders of America's Christian churches choose to closely and publicly support the policies and actions of our nation's leadership – policies and actions irreconcilable with the pursuit of peace and justice. Many of these policies and actions demean people of color, support hate-filled speech from white supremacists, ostracize gender minorities, demonize refugees and immigrants, and ignore climate change realities. These policies and actions embolden others to act similarly; polarize people within and beyond this nation; falsely cloak nationalism, fascism, and racism in words of universal beliefs and values, distorting and undermining the very bases of many faiths, not the least of which is what it means to be Christ-affirming.

As contemplatives of diverse ancestries, traditions, and faiths, we hold in common our witness to:

- Love and compassion
- Healing of division
- Promotion protection of human dignity
- Stewardship of creation

In so holding, we honor and cherish the inherent Divinity existing within all of creation.

Our intention is to stand in unanimity and non-violent resistance to the very real threats to that which we hold in common. Recognizing that actions of tribalism, fascism, isolationism, and similar divisive initiatives are now happening throughout this world, as citizens of this nation, together, we seek to provide a common message to reject and resist the policies and actions of our nation and its leaders when they run counter to our common holdings.

As contemplatives of diverse faiths, we may and must speak with one voice in this matter today. "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil," warned Dietrich Bonhoeffer. "Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act." Precisely because we want to remain

faithful to both the Divine which we seek to understand and the Love which we seek to live, we choose to not be silent. We choose to speak and act.

We have a common message in this time of common need:

- To the extent that our government affirms the basic dignity of all people and works deliberately to provide equal access to law, economic opportunity, education, healthcare, and a healthy environment, we will be loyal citizens. But to the extent it promotes factionalism, racism, fascism, unequal treatment in law enforcement, gender bias, or harm to the poor, the oppressed, the disadvantaged, the unwanted, the



refugee, and the environment, we declare that we will non-violently reject and resist.

- Our security comes not from gun ownership or military might; it does not come from oppression of the many for the enrichment of the few; it does not come from degrading others who are unlike ourselves. As contemplatives of many faiths, we seek the welfare of all our brothers and sisters, including those of differing perspectives and opinions. But to the extent that current policies and actions demand allegiance to the tyranny of the privileged and the few, we declare we will non-violently reject and resist.

- We seek to speak the truth in love and to challenge the prevailing ideological and political convictions

which do not align with the Divinity of love. We understand that free speech, pursuit of happy and healthy living, and freedom of religion lay in the Constitutional foundation of this nation's history and in our hopes of securing and protecting the dignity of all humanity. We believe in the full and equal exercise of these rights by all people. To the degree that our leaders shun these rights and their equal exercise, we declare we will non-violently reject and resist.

- We embrace separation of the powers of Church and State and urge all to continue to embrace it. And while individuals may vote as

their conscience dictates, it is blatantly false to proclaim that any elected or appointed leader of this nation, including the President, represents more than a person charged with the duty to serve all of the people of this nation; it is blatantly false to proclaim that he is anointed or especially chosen of God to lead this nation; it is blatantly false to conclude that he is somehow above the constraints of moral and legal scrutiny. To such positions, we declare we will non-violently reject and resist.

Therefore, the undersigned hereby commit to avail themselves of contemplative, non-violent action and ask spiritual and faith leaders and followers across the United States to join us in works of "divine obedience" in resistance against current and future policies and actions which marginalize any human being of any color, class, race, religion, disability, or gender; which threaten the stewardship of creation; which embrace evil rather than good and hate rather than love. We ask you to reject and resist the words, policies, and actions of exclusion, denigration, hatred, fascism, and nationalism. Ω

To add your name, go to: www.change.org/t/barmen-declaration-en-us.

Just these two words God spoke changed my life,
“Enjoy Me.”

What a burden I thought I was to carry—
a crucifix, as did Christ.

Love once said to me, “I know a song.
Would you like to hear it?”

And laughter came from every brick in the street
and from every pore in the sky.

After a night of prayer, God changed my life when
God sang, “Enjoy Me.”

Saint Teresa of Avila
(1515-1582)



Theo's Potato

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

My daughter-in-law Patricia planted potatoes in our garden back in early May. While we routinely plant peppers, tomatoes, kale, basil, and strawberries, we had never tried to grow potatoes. At the suggestion of more experienced gardeners, Patricia planted the spuds in a large barrel filled with dirt to accommodate the tubers' deep roots. My wife Claire promised our grandchildren, May, Frances, and Theo, that they would be the ones to harvest the crop. Although our Irish ancestors depended on the potato, Claire and I had no idea whether or not our grandchildren would pull up full-size versions or disappointingly tiny tots. Harvesting visible fruit is easy, but how were we to know when the potatoes were ripe? As a kid, I routinely pulled up immature carrots and radishes. Thankfully, our farmer friend Jen Burt and son Aiden, who worked at the Community Harvest Farm in Grafton, told us to wait until the above ground plant gets so tall it flops over onto itself.

When that happened, we convened our excited grandchildren who eagerly pulled up a more bountiful crop than any of us expected. One-and-a-half-year-old Theo went to work immediately peeling his potato with a stick. When his parents, Grace and Anthony, took him home, Theo not only insisted on keeping his treasured vegetable with him when he took his bath, but also could not be coaxed to sleep without the potato at his side.

Would that we all valued the fruits of the earth as much as Theo does. Ω

Fossil Fuel Chutzpah

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In the face of considerable evidence that the fossil fuel industry deliberately concealed the link between their products and climate change, numerous states, including Massachusetts, are suing for damages. Like the tobacco companies before them, oil and gas corporations used pseudo-science to frustrate reputable efforts to tackle climate change. Instead of taking seriously even their own research, fossil fuel giants encouraged more consumption. They made trillions of dollars doubling the world's CO₂ over the last thirty years, while their greed and cynicism may have robbed humanity of its best chance to prevent catastrophic climate change.

In light of these revelations, one might expect contrition, compensation, and a commitment to transition away from fossil fuels, as industry has left behind many other lethal products. But no, corporations are hell-bent on extracting every last ounce of oil, gas, and coal, even if they have to do so via environmentally destructive methods like fracking, strip mining, mountaintop removal, and refining tar sands. Like Dr. Seuss's villain in *The Lorax*, they seem

incapable of stopping themselves until the earth is desolate. But, even Dr. Seuss' Once-ler never asked his victims to subsize ameliorating his mad venture. And yet, this is precisely what oil companies now propose.



Seppo Leinonen

incapable of stopping themselves until the earth is desolate. But, even Dr. Seuss' Once-ler never asked his victims to subsize ameliorating his mad venture. And yet, this is precisely what oil companies now propose.

More shocking still, along the same coast of Texas which suffered the most lethal natural disaster in US history, the Galveston hurricane in 1900, politicians have opted not to fund similar protections. Refineries have the priority.

“The oil and gas must be saved. The people be damned.” While that may be BP, Exxon, Shell, Chevron, and Sunoco's motto, it shouldn't be the government's. Ω

According to an August 23, 2008 Associated Press report, fossil fuel companies lobbied the government to protect them from climate-change induced storms. With the support of Republican Senators Ted Cruz and John Cornyn, thirty refineries are seeking at least twelve billion dollars to build concrete seawalls,

earthen barriers, floating gates, and steel levees along sixty miles of the Texas Gulf Coast.

LETTERS



Dear Claire and Scott,
I stood at an intersection yesterday evening for an hour with my sign proclaiming: "A Free Press: Enemy of Liars Despots and Cheats."

I thought one way to support a free press would be to purchase a newspaper subscription or magazine subscription for a friend, relative, neighbor, or school. I've been doing this for the past few years. This idea deserves renewed commitment, given a president that characterizes the media and media personalities he dislikes as "fake news" and "enemies of the people."

I encourage you to consider challenging the readership of *The Catholic Radical* to purchase a 6 or 12-month subscription to a daily, weekly or monthly news piece for a friend, relative, neighbor, school, or library. *Mother Jones*, the *Christian Science Monitor* and even *Rolling Stone* do investigative journalism.

David Maher
North Brookfield, Massachusetts

Hello Scott & Claire,
How important it is to know your literature. Literature can be a powerful weapon. I find [Pedro] Arrupe's account of the bombing of Hiroshima very powerful. Thanks a lot. We would like to translate this article to put it to use in Holland too.

I find your Saint Francis CO2-free Day action very interesting and challenging. I am not sure yet if we will join you because I am away from home, hiking the Etna & Stromboli volcanoes, but we will certainly keep a close look at your pioneering. As I write, my daughter Jia Jia is engaged in a nonviolent shutting down of a natural gas pumping station. *Pax et Bonum!*

Frits ter Kuile
Jeanette Noel Catholic Worker
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Dear Scott and Claire,
There's a new Ignatius Press book about Dorothy Day, as if a new book is necessary. It's by Terrence C. Wright, an introduction to her life and thought.

Claire, I enjoyed your article in the June/July issue about the trip to Germany and England. I love reading about people I would like to meet, such as Bernd Büscher. I imagine what interesting conversations I could have with him.

Your August/September issue and Pedro Arrupe's article on the atomic bombings. I say where was America's intelligence community then? Could they not foresee what the hell we were ushering in? Now we want to take the moral high ground and decide which countries can or cannot have their own atomic bombs. I still contend we could have defeated Japan without more loss of life. Truman only dropped the bombs as a warning to Stalin not to mess with the US. No other reason.

Richard N. Douglass
Northampton, Massachusetts

Dear Scott & Claire,
The world has changed. Volvo's commercial for a car made in China includes Julie Andrews singing "These are a few of my favorite things" from *The Sound of Music*. Wasn't this a movie about a family escaping a totalitarian regime (Nazi) to Switzerland? Now Volvo is selling a car made by a totalitarian state! The salesman at the autoshow didn't want to say China. Instead, he said "Made in Asia." God help us.

...Is the media so intimidated by ad money that they overlook the morality of what industry and China are doing? Even in Abby Kelley's day (1850) industry (textile) held a firm hand on people, both North and South. England was seeing the South as a separate country for cotton even though England had given up slavery years before (1830). Her friend/Friend/cohort at Uxbridge Meeting, Effingham Capron, had a family textile business but was free from cotton as he wove wool. My grandfather wove wool until a strike was called. Workers were called from Ireland. The strike ended as did his job.... One flag at the Friends Cemetery I care for is for a soldier who fought in New Orleans to stop

cotton from being shipped to England.

I can only pray that we in the United States can recognize our addiction to Chinese goods and find our way to a simpler life, one kinder to God's creation.

Marcel Saint Germain
North Smithfield, Rhode Island

Dear Goodman Scott:

Been meaning to write but the summer means self-indulgence in all the cultural events (mostly classical music) that New England and New York state have to offer. The latest issue with the photo of the little boy with his dead brother on his back really hit me. I recently read two novels by an Irish writer that I like very much named Sebastian Barry. The second was fine writing and had a family member's story from the previous novel. The descriptions of the awful carnage of the trenches in World War I were hard to get through.

A while back, I read of the horrors of the fire bombing of Hamburg. The bombing of Dresden with its splendid architectural and historical losses has always haunted me, but in terms of loss of life the Hamburg raids may have killed more.

I remember in college watching Pope Paul VI speaking to the United Nations in French words that I will always recall "*Jamais plus la guerre*," i.e., "Never again war."

Congratulations on the many years you have preached this message and the time at your multi-national place.

Phil Brewer
Rutland, Massachusetts

Dear Scott & Claire,
I enjoyed reading your most attractive little book *Murder on Mott Street*, Scott. I liked the characterizations of Tamar and Peter. I really liked the afterword on CW personalities, thought it was terrific.

I did have some trouble with Agent Thirteen [the villain] though. He just did not seem to come across to me as a guy who could slash throats, especially throats of innocent people. In the end even Tamar sized him up as a pretty good guy....

Of course, in history, good Christians have reluctantly, but in their own sense of good conscience, killed a few bad apples

to save the lives of many, or attempted to do so. I think of that most esteemed Christian, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who was involved in the plot to assassinate Hitler. The thing that bothered me with Thirteen, aka John, was that he could kill good apples, innocent people. So the cognitive dissonance caused by the contradiction in his character gave me a little mental discomfort.

But all in all, I liked the book very much, and see it as an excellent primer on the Catholic Worker movement.

And Claire, I also liked your article, "Invisible Radicality," very much. It was delightful; and in it I was happy and most surprised to meet Bernd Büscher, a Protestant, and Ghazal, a Muslim, as part of the CW movement. Your article along with Eric Cussen Anglada's fine account of CW agrarian community growth around the world gave off a strong ray of light in these dark times.

Richard McCarthy
Lawrence, Massachusetts

Editor's Note: The primary justification

for taking lives, especially in war, is the elimination of "bad apples." In reality, most victims are innocent. The psychiatrist Robert Jay Lifton wrote a book called Nazi Doctors to explore how physicians could commit atrocities in concentration camps and then go home to their families. He concluded that Nazis, combat veterans, and arms manufacturers coped through a process he called "psychic numbing." More recent studies have concluded that drone missile operators rely on the same process to prevent mental breakdowns. Those who cannot compartmentalize killing the innocent within a moral framework suffer traumatic stress. Scott deliberately portrayed his villain as a decent person to highlight the inherent flaw in Just War rationalizations for killing and to invite his readers to consider pacifism as a real alternative.

Hi, Dear Friends,
Murder on Mott St. is delightful and clever. The Tamar character is especially great.

Daniel Marshall
New York, New York

Hi, Scott,

...Your book fails as a novel, but all the other plusses far outweigh that....

Joan Thomas
Tucson, Arizona

Scott,

...California on fire as I write! lots of fires going. One-hundred degree days don't help much. Goes along with the other happenings outside: sex scandals, volcanoes, shootings, bombings, Trump always up to something!... Last year, all summer, the chapel closed as the air conditioner went out. Just "too hot" (95 degrees plus inside), so services and meetings were cancelled.

By magic, as summer began this year, the air went out again. No word if or when it could be fixed. Satan tries its best to keep guys out of chapel!

Still over-crowded, and gang activities are considered the norm, actually promoted. I wonder why society allows this overcrowding and gangs.

Prayers coming your way.

Clifford Smith
Avenal State Prison
Avenal, California

Editor's Note: The US incarcerates the highest percentage of its population in the world. The two largest providers of telephone services for jails and prisons, Securus Technologies and IC Solutions, want to merge. Should they be permitted by the Federal Communications Commission to do so (a likely outcome given the Trump administration's cozy relationship with for profit prisons) the exorbitant fees prisoners now pay, up to \$25 for a fifteen minute call, will go even higher. Profiting from inmates is the antithesis of the Christian responsibility to bring comfort to those in prison.

Dear Scott,

I am in prison and am confined to my prison cell for almost 24 hours a day. I have no family, and since it gets lonely, I was wondering if one of your readers might like a pen-pal. I am 55 years old. I would love to have a friend.

Richard Deeds # 14946
PO Box 650
Indian Springs, NV 89070

Catholic Worker Calendar



October 3 — Crisis at the Border: Ray Kane of Saint Patrick's Church in Whitinsville gives a personal reflection on his time working at the US/Mexico border with migrant families. 7 P.M., 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

October 10, 24 & November 7 — Evening Prayer: Join us for prayer and Taize chant. 7 P.M., 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

October 13 & November 17 — Vigil to Reverse the Gun Culture: Join us at The Gun Parlor shooting range. 12:30-1:30 P.M., 170 Prescott Street, Worcester.

November 14 — Sing Along: The incomparable Dan Burke accompanies us with music from many generations. Send your favorite songs to thereseCW2@gmail.com. An event not to be missed. We'll provide the lyrics, food, and drink. 7 P.M. 52 Mason Street.

November 15 — Vigil to Remove ROTC: Join us outside Saint Joseph's Chapel at Holy Cross College on the anniversary of the Jesuit martyrs of El Salvador as we call for the end of military training at Jesuit colleges. Noon-1 P.M.

Mason Street Musings

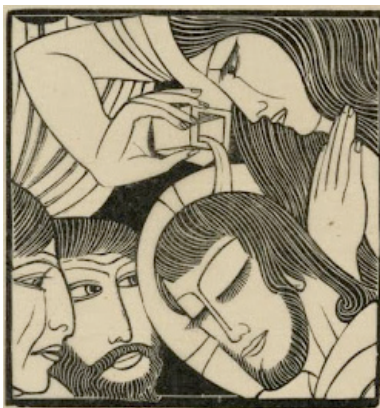
During the jittery days of the Cuban missile crisis, our guest T lived with her family on a military base in California. She remembers the blackened windows of the airplane that carried them to an underground bunker apparently built to harbor military personnel in the event of nuclear war. The bunker's accommodations varied according to your father's rank. Posh rooms for the officers' families, basic fare for the dependents of grunts. Because T's dad was in Special Forces, their shelter was "middle class."

T was a very small child at the time, and her recollections of that period are uneven and vividly impressionistic. She remembers getting spooked in the bunker's cavernous storeroom. She remembers watching adults unload body bags from Vietnam onto the base. A snake slithered out of one bag after its unzipping, startling a grown-up who quickly whacked the creature's head off.

"In the military, you see things that you are not supposed to see as a child," she

says. "It teaches you life is precious, and no one is better than anyone else." Death is the great equalizer.

All that watching of war's consequences prompted T to write to



Eric Gill

Soviet Premier Nikita Krushchev, North Vietnamese leader Ho Chi Minh, and President Lyndon Johnson and appeal to them for peace. Krushchev and Minh gave congenial replies. Minh wrote that he "actually loved America," having once

lived in Boston. [He worked as a baker in the city's famous Parker Hotel.] Johnson's response, however, was dismissive. He told her to leave the making of foreign policy to the adults.

T recounts all of this in the upstairs kitchen, her black hair swept across one shoulder. She is unusually beautiful, and her delivery of these fascinating tales mesmerizing. Once again I wish for a tape recorder, a tool I ought to always carry on Mason Street.

A week earlier, Reverend Dyer, my most Christian of neighbors, told me about his cross-country, soul-saving trip made many years ago. He had had his fill of working in California and caught a ride with three strangers, East coasters, like himself, eager to head home. It was a wild journey; his fellow passengers began doing dope before the car left Oakland. They caroused and womanized their way across the country, selling their blood to pay for gas when the money ran out. It was at a mission in Salt Lake City, after a Tuesday night prayer service in which the people sang as if "really filled with the Spirit," that the preacher looked him square in the face and said, "Man, don't you know you are anointed by God?"

I am reading the desert Fathers and Mothers who, like Reverend Dyer, heeded their anointing. I aspire to do the same. This is not easy, for I am a distractible woman, and "the world," in all its marvels and sorrows, is very much with me.

T left one morning in early September after a blow-out with her roommate, a fierce go-getter with her own stories from California. D, an economic refugee from Sierra Leone, now sits in her place at the supper table. Beside him is N, a Worcester native, an industrious worker and brother of a Catholic priest. Addictions have rendered him homeless. Poverty, whether material or spiritual, is also a great equalizer.

We ourselves are in need of money to replace the downstairs fridge and cover the cost of this publication which we hope strengthens your faith in the God who anoints us all. If so, kindly remember us. Pray for us too. ☩

Claire

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